

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MAY 31, 2015

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES will end today, May 31st, for the Summer. We'll maintain the small coloring table in the hall for the toddlers.

PITA DOUGH ROLLING SATURDAY, JUNE 13TH, at 9:00 am. We need to build up our inventory of pitas, and we need your help. With 12-15 people the work can be evenly distributed and can be finished with prep and clean-up in 3-4 hours. Contact Chris Toda at: thetodas@msn.com, or 508-832-6271.

LOOKING FOR THIS YEAR'S HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATES in our Parish so they can be recognized for their accomplishment! If you know of a soon-to-be graduate, please inform Fr. Nick or Tim Rucho.

GODPARENTS & GRANDPARENTS SUNDAY. On **Sunday, June 21st**, together with the closing ceremonies for Religious Education, we will host "Godparents and Grandparents Sunday." Children (and adults) are encouraged to invite their godparent or grandparent to join them at Divine Liturgy, after which a special prayer will be offered to affirm those relationships. We will also be honoring graduates from our parish. A Parish Cookout will follow on the

GREETERS TEAM 1:

V. GERALD BELBA & CĂLIN GALERIU

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:

ILEANA & SEAN FAHEY,

DIMITRI SAFFRON,

CHRISTOS & SPIRO SPYROU

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 2:1-11 ☩ GOSPEL: JOHN 7:37-53; 8:12

EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

Church Grounds (rain or shine) to kick off the summer with hot dogs, burgers, sausages and all the fixings. Lawn chairs and bats, balls, and other back yard games are welcomed. **If you would like to contribute to sponsoring the event, please see or contact Deb Sedares.** Adults: \$15.00 — Children: \$5.00. Reservations are needed by Sunday, June 14. Sign up at the Candle Stand or see Eleanor Sedares during Coffee Hour or e-mail: info@StNicholasChurch.org. **Dimitri Saffron** is organizing the cook-out. **Please let him know if you can help with the event.** His e-mail is: DSLandscape1@yahoo.com. A volunteer sign-up sheet is also posted on the Stewardship Bulletin Board in the church hall.

COMMUNITY NEWS

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN. St. George Orthodox Cathedral is hosting a Mo-

bilePack event where **500 volunteers will come together on June 27th to pack 100,000 life-saving meals** for starving children in developing countries. This will be the only location in the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts to host this event. The goal is to raise \$22,000. Adults and children as young as 5 years of age will measure and scoop ingredients, seal bags, and prepare boxes for shipping. Registration will be live beginning May 16th; go to the website to register. You may **donate online** at www.stgeorgeworchester.org or mail your check to: Feed My Starving

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sun, May 31 Feast of Pentecost
Close of Religious Ed for Summer
- June 5, 6, & 7 Albanian Festival at St. Mary's
- Sat, June 6 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
- Sat, June 13 Pita Dough Rolling 9am
- Sun, June 21 Godparents/Grandparents Sunday
Parish Cookout

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850

E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG

A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

Children; ATTN: MobilePack #1506-99AU; 401 93rd Avenue NW; Coon Rapids, MN 55433. Checks should be payable to: FMSC, memo line MobilePack #1506-99AU. We are trying to organize a group from St. Nicholas to help with this. If you are interested in participating please see or contact Deb Sedares.

THE 2015 ALBANIAN FESTIVAL will be held the weekend of **June 5, 6, & 7** by **St. Mary's Assumption Albanian Orthodox Church** on Salisbury Street in Worcester. Please plan on attending and supporting our sister parish! For more information: www.albanianfestival.org/

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center & Holy Trinity Hospice are Orthodox Charities and rely on your donations to continue the mission of providing the best care possible.

FINANCIAL FACT

"Burning the Mortgage"

We have received \$117,000 in pledges (over 3 years) towards our Burn The Mortgage Campaign, which is 23% of our outstanding principal balance of \$513,015 (as of 4/28/15)

2015 GRADUATES

*"He has filled them with the spirit of God, with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft."
(Exodus 35:31)*

We want to acknowledge members of our Church community who are celebrating a graduation and recognize their achievement.

HIGH SCHOOL

Nicholas Belishta is graduated from Doherty Memorial High School and will attend Worcester State University in the Fall.

Alexandra Dymek is graduated from Worcester Technical High School specializing in culinary arts, and is currently engaged at a local restaurant.

Brian Rucho is graduated from Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School and will be attending Westfield State University to pursue a career in education.

COLLEGE

Nicole Trakadas is graduated *Summa Cum Laude* from Framingham State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Science. She also earned an Environmental Science Award, an Honors Science Book Award and the Ada Shawkey Scholarship Award.

Christine Masterjohn was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology at Worcester State University. She is currently pursuing a graduate degree Healthcare Management at Assumption College.

May our loving Lord continue to bless their efforts and grant them a long life, health, prosperity, and many, many years!



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O ONLY TRUE GOD, known by reason to be one and by faith to be three, one God in three Persons; O eternal Father, who sent your only Son for our salvation, without ever being diminished by your love; O only Son, who came and took on our nature to save us, without ever being diminished by your self-sacrifice; and you, O all-holy Spirit, consoler, who share your gifts with us, without ever being diminished by your generosity! O divine Trinity: As we celebrate this feast of Pentecost, we beseech you to manifest your power in our lives by the growth that always heralds your presence. Undo and uproot all that is wrong with us. Refashion our minds and hearts with your wisdom and love, and enable us to labor unceasingly to banish all evil from our lives. By your gentleness make our minds and hearts supple and pliant, open and responsive to you in every moment that confronts us, and perfect and enrich our lives moment by moment, that we may reach the glory of eternal life.

For yours it is to have mercy on us and save us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE RUSH OF WIND AND TONGUES OF FIRE

THIS is the eighth Sunday of Pascha, the day of Pentecost. It is also the Fiftieth Day after Pascha. In Biblical imagery infinity is usually described as seven times seven, because seven is considered the number of perfection. Seven times seven is perfection squared. Fifty is beyond perfection; it is God's time.

The Holy Spirit comes to us in God's time not only as a sign, but as the actual reality of the promised Kingdom. He comes as wind and fire (cf. Act 2:2,3). His presence fills the space, while also resting on each one individually. He makes God known to us and enables us to proclaim Him to the world.

The principle text for the Feast is Acts 2:1-11. Even though the Pentecost event is the final chapter in the whole story of God's economy (His plan of salvation), St. Luke places it at the beginning of the second volume of his Gospel (i.e. Acts). What began with the Birth of the Savior, ends with the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is placed at the beginning of the second volume because while it may be the final chapter of one story, it is also the beginning of another. The coming of the Holy Spirit to 'rest' on us (v. 3) is the birth of the Church. The Apostles' missionary activity described in the Book of Acts requires the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Just as the Christian Feast of Pascha has roots in the Old Testament Feast of Passover, so too the Christian Feast of Pentecost has a Jewish antecedent. It was approximately fifty days after the Children of Israel had left Egypt that they arrived at Mount Sinai. (Exodus 19:1ff) There Moses ascended to God who revealed Himself by fire and smoke and wind. (cf. Exodus 19:18, also Isaiah 66:15ff) Moses ascends the mountain to meet God and descends with the Tablets of the Law.

God fulfills His Law in the New Covenant with the outpouring of the Spirit. When the people ran and gathered to find out what was causing the sound of rushing wind, St. Peter an-

swered them with words from the Prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ... And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. (Joel 2:28-30, Acts 2:14-20)

When the Holy Spirit descended on those assembled in the upper room, tongues of fire appeared and were distributed and rested on each one there (v. 3), not just the Apostles, but everyone. As the Prophet Joel said, "Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit." (Joel 2:29) The Holy Spirit is a gift to the whole Church. The gifts of the Spirit are distributed to each one (cf. Ephesians 4:11) for the building up of the Body of Christ. We have been given these gifts in Baptism and Holy Anointing (Chrismation).

When the Spirit had been given to them they all began to speak in tongues. Some commentators think this might have been *glossolalia* (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:1ff), what Pentecostal Christians call 'speaking in tongues,' but St. Luke says, "other tongues," and records how Jews from all over the world who were in Jerusalem at the time were amazed and said, "how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?" (v. 8) So, while some may have been 'speaking in tongues,' the Spirit had also given them the power to speak in languages so that everyone could understand.

The Church has always understood the Pentecost event as a remedy to the division of humanity into languages and nations following the sin of Babel. In Genesis (11:1-9) we read that in the beginning everyone spoke one language. This enabled people to begin to build a tower "with its top in the heavens." They said that they wanted to "make a name" for themselves. The problem was not that they were cooperating; it was how

they were cooperating. Their cooperation led them to believe arrogantly that they could challenge God. Seeing how their arrogance was bringing them to evil purpose, God "confused their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." Unable to communicate with one another, they scattered throughout the world abandoning their Tower.

The Tower of Babel divided humanity. The Holy Spirit restored that unity on the day of Pentecost. However, the unity we have in the Holy Spirit is different than the pre-Babel unity in one very important respect. The unity of Babel was predicated on a uniformity of language, and one can presume, culture. The unity that the Holy Spirit brings preserves our particular and distinctive characteristics. It is unity in diversity and diversity in unity. The Church sees the Pentecost event as a way to understand how diverse people can be one in Christ. Historically, unity of faith has not necessitated one language or even one uniform practice throughout the Church. We can share one faith and be one Church even as we acknowledge our ethnic and cultural diversity, our individuality.

When St. Peter had finished speaking to the assembled crowd on Pentecost day, people asked him what they should do. He said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him." (Acts 2:38-39)

"And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (v. 21)

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA